



Thickening Bermuda Stands by Reseeding

During the past two years, drought, heat and insects have severely damaged many bermuda pastures and hayfields across the country. In some areas, bermuda stands have suffered thinning losses of 50% or more. The question becomes “*Can bermuda stands be thickened by planting seeded bermuda into the existing stand?*” The answer to this will depend on several factors including soil fertility, amount of thinning, expected weed pressure and perhaps the availability of equipment needed for the job.

- **Amount of thinning:** If thinning is uniform (no large bare areas) and is less than 50%, the bermuda stand will thicken on its own with adequate amounts of rainfall and fertilizer coupled with good weed control.
- **Expected weed pressure:** A thin bermuda stand leads to the encroachment of summer annual broadleaf weed and grass infestations. Aggressive annual weeds hinder the bermuda thickening process and can result in stand failure if reseeding is attempted. Appropriate herbicides should be used to control/suppress annual weeds and grasses. This reduces competition and allows an existing bermuda stand to re-establish more rapidly. If herbicides are used, check the herbicide label for plant-back times if planning to reseed any thin areas.
- **Soil fertility:** Maintaining proper soil pH and soil potassium levels are critical for bermuda growth, health and persistence. Good soil fertility significantly enhances the ability of bermudagrass to recover from stresses brought on by periods of extreme drought, heat and/or cold. Lime and potassium are key components of bermuda stand life and health. Thus, neither should be short changed.



Drought, heat and insects have severely damaged many bermuda pastures and hayfields across the country. Reseeding bare areas in pastures and hayfields may be necessary to thicken the bermuda stand.

Reseeding to Thicken Stand

If bermuda thinning has created large bare areas, then re-seeding should be considered. Seeded varieties like Pennington’s Cheyenne II, Mohawk and Ranchero Frio blend can be used successfully for this purpose. For best results, delay seeding until soil temperatures average 65 degrees or higher at a 4 inch depth in the spring. If seed are to be broadcast, the soil surface in the bare areas will need loosening prior to seeding by scratching with a finger drag or by light disking. Following seeding, a culti-packer or similar roller device should be used to press the seed into the soil and firm the ground. A no-till drill can be used, but extreme care should be taken not to plant the seed too deep. A seeding depth of 1/8” is recommended for seeded bermuda. If weeds become problematic, keep them mowed periodically to help reduce competition with the developing bermuda seedlings. To further reduce competition from weeds and grasses, delay the application of fertilizers containing nitrogen until the bermuda seedlings have fully emerged.



For more information, contact Pennington Seed at
1-800-285-Seed or www.penningtonusa.com